## **IN THE CLAIMS**:

Please amend the claims to read as follows:

- 1. (original) A method of preparing an imadizolium salt comprising:
  - (a) synthesizing a diimine compound; and
  - (b) subjecting the diimine compound to ring closure conditions.
- 2. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein:

the diimine compound is from the group consisting of 1, 3, diaryldiazabutadiene, 1, 3, dialkyldiazabutadiene, and 1, 3, arylalkyldiazabutadiene; and

paraformaldehyde and a protic acid provide the ring closure conditions.

- 3. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the diimine compound is 1.
- 4. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the diimine compound is 3.
- 5. (currently amended) The method of any one of claims 1-4, claim 1, wherein the diimine compound is subjected to ring closure conditions at or below room temperature.
- 6. (currently amended) The method of any one of claims 1-5, claim 1, wherein the salt includes a counterion.
- 7. (original) The method of claim 6, wherein the counterion is determined by the acid used for ring closure.
- 8. (currently amended) The method of any one of claims 1-7, claim 1, wherein the diimine compound is synthesized at room temperature.
- 9. (currently amended) The method of any one of claims 1-8, claim 1, wherein between steps (a) and (b) the diimine compound is mixed with a solvent from the group consisting of: methanol, ethyl acetate, ethanol, tetrahydrofuran, and toluene.
- 10. (currently amended) The method of any one of claims 1-9, claim 1, wherein the synthesis of the diimine compound and the ring closure are carried out in air.
- 11. (currently amended) The method of any one of claims 1-10, claim 1, wherein no solvent pre-drying steps are performed.
- 12. (original) The salt prepared by the method of claim 2 when the diimine compound is 1, 3, arylalkyldiazabutadiene.
- 13. (currently amended) The salt prepared by the method of claim 4-or any preceding claim depending directly or indirectly on claim 4.
- 14. (original) The imadizolium salt 1,3-Bis(2,6-diisopropylphenyl)imidazolium chloride.

- 15. (currently amended) The invention of any prior claim, claim 1, wherein the protic acid is HCl, HBF<sub>4</sub>, or HPF<sub>6</sub>.
- 16. (currently amended) The invention of any prior claim, claim 1, wherein the protic acid is HCl.
- 17. (original) The method of claim 9, wherein the solvent is ethyl acetate.
- 18. (original) A method of preparing an imadizolium salt comprising:
  - (a) providing a diimine compound from the group consisting of 1 and 3;
  - (b) mixing the diimine compound with a solvent from the group consisting of: methanol, ethyl acetate, ethanol, tetrahydrofuran, and toluene; and
  - (c) at or below room temperature, mixing the diimine compound and solvent with paraformaldehyde and a protic acid.
- 19. (original) The method of claim 18, wherein the diimine compound is 1 and the salt is 2.
- 20. (original) The method of claim 18, wherein the diimine compound is 3 and the salt is 4.
- 21. (cancelled)